

MD NEWS

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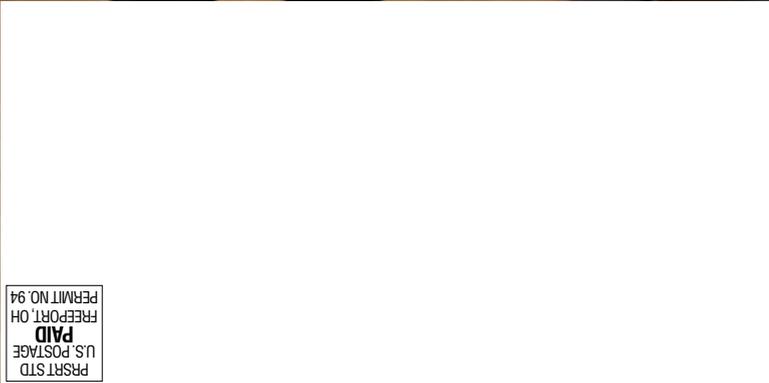
Patient-centered Intensive Rehabilitation:

Preparing for the Journey Forward

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Patient-centered Intensive Rehabilitation: Preparing for the Journey Forward

By Hannah Stuart





WITH A NEW FACILITY METICULOUSLY DESIGNED TO OPTIMIZE CARE, EXPAND CAPACITY AND ENHANCE PATIENT COMFORT, REGIONS HOSPITAL REHABILITATION INSTITUTE CONTINUES A NEARLY 60-YEAR LEGACY OF DELIVERING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF INPATIENT AND OUTPATIENT CARE.

WHEN DESIGNING THE new facilities and determining which features were necessary to best support a patient's recovery, Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute's leaders met with a number of interdisciplinary focus groups — some composed of former patients and their families — to gather input. Informed by the expertise of Regions' providers and former patients, the new unit features a design that facilitates best rehabilitative practices and better addresses patients' needs. The new unit includes 17 private patient rooms — with capacity for 21 — community space for patients and their families, in-room lifts for patients who have difficulty moving, and video monitoring to increase patient safety.

“The conditions we most commonly treat are strokes, traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries and amputations; because of this, we need to be able to provide a peaceful, calm environment,” says Rebecca Koerner, MD, Medical Director of Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation and Department Chair for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at HealthPartners. “Previously, our patient rooms had two and three beds in



“Collaboration underpins the way we care for patients, and the expertise of our team distinguishes us from other local facilities. Our collective expertise enables us to deliver care that sets the patient up to be successful after discharge.”

— Steven Jackson, MD, FAAPMR, Lead, Spinal Cord Injury Medicine at Regions Hospital



BEYOND THE PHYSICAL

IN ADDITION TO providing both inpatient and outpatient support groups for patients with stroke and traumatic brain injury, Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute also offers a peer-mentoring program for patients with spinal cord injury, where recovered patients meet with current patients to support them throughout the recovery process.

“I’ve seen people work harder in therapy because their motivation rises after meeting with a peer mentor,” says Steven Jackson, MD, FAAPMR, Lead, Spinal Cord Injury Medicine at Regions Hospital. “I speak to patients who are most upbeat and motivated about getting involved in mentoring other patients. Their attitudes are infectious, and they set a person up to be successful even before the rehab program begins.”



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them, so the expanded space provides more comfortable patient rooms that can accommodate patients’ families and extra equipment that elevates the level of care we provide.”

Fundamental Features

Already accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of

Rehabilitation Facilities, Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute’s new facility establishes a healing environment for traumatic brain injury and stroke patients who require cognitive rest. It also facilitates nurses’ access to patients and provides dedicated spaces that are used for physical and occupational therapy. For example, laundry

and shower rooms enable patients to practice routine tasks under medical supervision so the transition home is less daunting.

“One room is designed like a home — with an adjustable bed, recliner and table — so patients can practice living independently before going home,” says Dr. Koerner. “This gives them and their families more confidence about returning home.”

Treating Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic brain injuries require specialist attention at all points on the care continuum, and providers at Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute are committed to meeting the needs of such patients.

“As far as brain injuries go, we’re able to treat the entire spectrum, from mild traumatic brain injury or concussion through severe traumatic brain injuries, as well as conditions such as stroke,” says Keith Moench, MD, Section Head for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Regions Hospital. “Our collaborative approach begins at the earliest stages of care to enhance recovery. Our physical medicine and rehabilitation specialists are consulted at the outset to make recommendations about when to initiate therapy.”

Providers deliver the full spectrum of acute and post-acute care for traumatic brain injuries and complement evidence-based practices with leading-edge treatments that might lead to groundbreaking outcomes. For example, through the Neurological Emergencies Treatment Trials Network, clinicians at Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute participated in the Protective Effects of Progesterone, or ProTECT, trial, which evaluated the efficacy of progesterone as an acute treatment for brain injury.

Following acute care, patients are transferred to the acute inpatient rehabilitation, where they participate

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in physical, occupational and speech language therapies, and have access to on-site water-based physical therapy in a therapeutic pool. Together with the patient, the physical medicine and rehabilitation team sets goals for transitioning patients home. An interdisciplinary team — comprised of rehab physicians, certified rehabilitation registered nurses available around the clock, physical, occupational, recreational and speech therapists, as well as rehab psychologists and social workers — works with patients and their families to optimize the return home and address any cognitive, emotional or behavior management problems caused by the injury.

To further promote independent living, providers at the Institute also offer driving evaluations and training among other comprehensive outpatient services.

Patients diagnosed with concussions at local urgent care centers or emergency departments can receive outpatient care at the Brain Injury Clinic provided by HealthPartners Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department. Rehabilitation specialists evaluate symptoms and determine the most effective treatments and services required to best manage each case. Follow-up care and condition-specific information are also provided.

Caring for Spinal Cord Injuries

Because spinal cord injuries require complex treatment plans that extend far beyond acute care, Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute has developed a comprehensive program predicated upon best rehabilitative practices for this patient population in which care is delivered by specialists and nurses who are highly trained to anticipate and prevent complications in both acute and post-acute settings.

The facility's commitment to providing coordinated care is particularly necessary when treating patients with spinal cord injuries, as providers must collaborate closely to repair the injury and shepherd patients through the rehabilitation process.

"Patients with spinal cord injuries require more support and education because they face more challenges during rehabilitation," says Steven Jackson, MD, FAAPMR, Lead, Spinal Cord Injury Medicine at Regions Hospital. "We are constantly in contact with the patient's team of physicians, particularly the neurosurgeons and trauma surgeons. We also provide ongoing education to our support staff, as well as the patient and family, to help coordinate the care the family will have to provide once the patient returns home."

RESEARCH AND RECOVERY

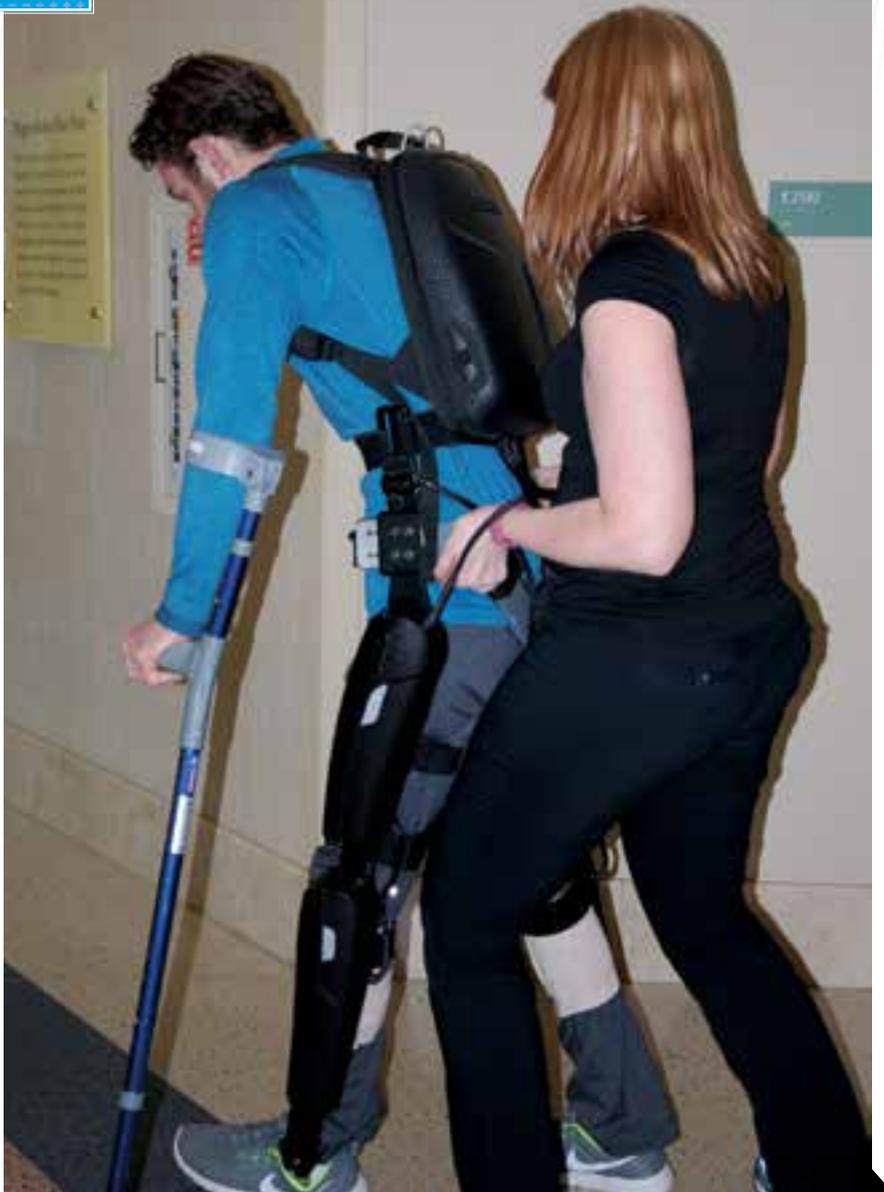


BECAUSE MANY OF its patients require extensive rehabilitation regimens dedicated to ambulation, Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute has invested in the latest assistive technology.

"Balance and weight-shifting are common issues following injuries not only to the brain, but to the vestibular system as well," says Keith Moench, MD, Section Head for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Regions Hospital. "To help these patients with their recovery, we purchased a NeuroCom device, an interactive system with a foot plate and screen that provides patients with immediate biofeedback to help them self-correct."

Regions also recently purchased the Armeo, a mechanical assist device for upper extremity training that allows patients to re-train a weak or paretic arm by practicing picking things up and moving them around.





Spinal cord specialists are particularly skilled at managing complications — especially spasticity management and neurogenic bladder and bowel dysfunction — and have established programs, such as the Safe Skin Initiative that address issues such as pressure ulcers and chronic wounds that commonly arise in patients with limited mobility.

To prevent muscle atrophy during the treatment process, providers at Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute administer functional electronic stimulation, which stimulates a neurologic response in affected muscles and facilitates functional return. Specialists also use this modality to enhance stroke recovery.

Commitment to Excellence

Providers at Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute continuously pursue ways to enhance the treatment and rehabilitative processes delivered at the facility. The facility participates in a number of clinical trials, including an Acorda Therapeutics-directed study that examined the efficacy of a medication used to treat acute spinal cord injuries.

Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute also partners with ReWalk, a company that manufactures robotic exoskeletons that enable nonambulatory patients to walk. Two patients utilize the exoskeleton during a special monthly clinic, and the hospital is exploring the viability of expanding the program to make exoskeletons available for at-home use.

Commitment to delivering the most effective treatments, coupled with dedication to bringing innovative treatments from bench to bedside, positions Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute to continue leading the Twin Cities in rehabilitative medicine.

To learn more, visit regionshospital.com and select “Rehabilitation Institute” under the “Specialties” menu. ■



PROTECTING BRAINS

IN 2009, NEARLY 250,000 patients 19 years old and younger were treated in emergency departments across the United States for concussions or traumatic brain injuries suffered while playing sports, according to CDC estimates. Of all traumatic brain injuries occurring in children up to age 14, approximately 55 percent were caused by falls.

To reduce the prevalence of preventable injuries in the Twin Cities area, Regions Hospital Rehabilitation Institute has partnered with the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation to send volunteer speakers who have experienced spinal cord injury, as well as therapists and nursing staff, to middle and high school driver’s education and health classes in Ramsey and Washington counties.

The program, which annually reaches approximately 1,600 students, promotes stopping and thinking before using poor judgment in situations that could potentially result in traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries, including:

- + Drinking and driving
- + Not wearing seat belts
- + Not wearing helmets while riding bicycles
- + Not taking proper precautions when playing sports